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crop and cattle blight. These he continued to explain in terms of a childlike picture of powerful supernatural elders.

It must also be noticed that although there are slight differences in the relationships of men and women to lineage ghosts, the ghosts are, in general, far more alike than are matrilineal elders. A man's relation with his mother is very different from that with his mother's brother, and his relations with different mother's brothers are by no means uniform. Yet the ghosts are collectively regarded as both protective and dangerously punitive. It seems probable, therefore, that a Nāyar reprojects his own supergo onto the standardized, institutionalized image of lineage ghosts which his culture provides him. For the superego, like the ghosts, is a composite of the prohibitions imposed by a number of elders. The superego is also formed in part from the individual's own aggression, which he defends against by projecting it upon the generalized parental image which he has internalized. If this view is correct, reprojection of the harsh superego onto ghosts in times of misfortune must serve to reduce guilt. For the offences which the ghosts ostensibly punish with sickness are often inadvertent or trivial ones, such as failure in the correct performance of rites. The astrologer's diagnosis may thus permit him to focus his generalized guilt (concerning deeper, unconscious aggressive impulses) upon a specific, minor lapse of duty on the part of himself or one of his kinsmen. He is then able to take practical steps to alleviate his guilt through propitiation of the supernatural agents. The Brahman's offerings on behalf of his ancestors also seem to serve as an alleviation of guilt, but in a different manner. For instead of reprojecting his harsh superego onto ancestral figures, the Brahman apparently projects it wholly outside the area of human relations onto a vindictive god of death, whose hell he believes endangers both his own and his parents' souls. He appears to alleviate his guilt through rites designed to preserve them and himself from this fate.

If it is true that the Nāyar reprojects his own superego upon the lineage ghosts, this would explain why the ghosts are so much more punitive than are living elders. They are thus fitting agents for the infliction of natural misfortunes, which in fact fall more heavily and capriciously than do the punishments of living elders. The fact that all members of the *taravād* are enabled to focus projected aggression and guilt feelings upon the ghosts probably enhances the internal solidarity of the *taravād*, by lifting a portion of these troublesome feelings from inside to outside the group. The cult thus brings together in rites of propitiation these very kinsmen who (in one aspect of their relationship) hate each other, and forges renewed bonds of mutual devotion in the appeasement of beings whom all of them fear.

Funerals and Anniversaries: The Sanskritic Cults

Although they retained the non-Sanskritic cults of ghosts, the Nāyars long ago adopted many Brahmanical usages in connection with funerals and with rites on the anniversary of a death. Such usages include cremation rather than burial of the dead, and offerings of rice balls (*bali*), water, and other oblations in the days of pollution following a death. As among Nambūdiri Brahmans, the chief heir, at the end of the period of pollution, enters a period of ascetic mourning (*dīkṣā*) for one year in Cochin and for forty-one days in Kottayam. At the end of this time he may dispose of the bones and ashes in a sacred river. He makes *bali* offerings to the spirit on each day of his mourning, and at its close, performs final offerings which unite the deceased with

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his forebears. Thereafter he offers rice balls and other oblations in a *śrāddham* ceremony on each anniversary of the death.

Many of these customs are of long standing among the Nāyars. Barbosa[18] reported in 1518 that Nāyar royalty observed *dīkṣā* for the dead in the same manner as Nambūdiris. Sheikh Zein-ud-Deen[19] recorded the custom for commoner Nāyars in 1579. Linschoten[20] reported in 1598 that Nāyars normally cremated their dead. Today, Nāyar death and anniversary rites are almost identical in form with those of Nambūdiris. During the period of death pollution they employ a lower matrilineal caste to instruct them in the rites. (In Cochin, Chīdigans fulfill this function; in South Malabar, Attikūrssis; and in North Malabar, Mārārs.) The same caste assists Nambūdiri Brahmans to prepare the ritual materials for their funerals, and has clearly transmitted the Brahmanical rites to the Nāyars. Similarly, at the end of the death pollution on the sixteenth day, during the *dīkṣā* period, and on anniversary days, Nāyars are instructed in their oblations by a priest of a degraded subcaste of Brahmans. (This subcaste is the Elayads in Cochin and South Malabar and the Nambidis in North Malabar.) A few peculiarly non-Brahmanical rites do, however, survive. In Kottayam, poorer Nāyars among commoners customarily bury their dead.[21] In both areas those who burn the dead bury the bones and ashes in a pot under a jack-fruit tree outside the ancestral house near the ancestor shrine. Some leave the bones there permanently and consider that the ghost remains near the bones and the ancestral house. Others dig up the bones after the period of mourning, dispose of half of them in a sacred river, and return the other half to the grave. The bones of *kāranavans* are sometimes placed on an open platform under a jack-fruit tree, to which food offerings are made on days of propitiation. Other rites spring from the Nāyar view that the ghost requires appeasement rather than mere assistance to another world. Brahmans, for example, pour holy water into the mouth of a dying man to purify him for entry into the world of ancestors. Old-fashioned Nāyars offer rice gruel as a last act of appeasement.

Even the Sanskritic rites are in fact so adapted to Nāyar requirements that they carry a quite different emphasis of meaning from that associated with them by Brahmans. First, the role-structure of the rites is, of course, completely adapted to the descent system. A Nambūdiri deceased's chief mourner is his or her eldest son, or, if there is no Nambūdiri son, the eldest brother's son. A Nāyar woman's chief mourner is her eldest son; that of a man, the man next junior to him in the property group. But all males of the *taravād* junior to the deceased make subsidiary *bali* offerings to him in the period of pollution. Brahman spouses observe mourning and death pollution for each other. Nāyar spouses traditionally observe no mourning or pollution for each other, for they belong to different *taravāds* and have no mutual legal obligations. If a Nāyar dies in a wife's house, his body must traditionally be returned to his *taravād* for cremation. Shortly before or after the death of her husband, a woman goes to view his body for the last time. She is then ceremonially conducted out of the house on the north side—the side opposite to that from which the god of death arrives. She is returned to her natal home, and after this she may never reenter her dead husband's house. In Cochin, where men traditionally had no obligations to their children, a child did not observe death pollution for his genitor. But in North Malabar, where children have an intimate relationship with the father in avunculoçal residence during childhood, a man's sons make offerings for him during death pollution, and the eldest son is second-in-command to the chief mourner at the cremation. The

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eldest son also traditionally observed *dīkṣā* for his father along with the matrilineal heir.

Age-rank within the *taravād* finds expression in the rites. Among Nambūdiri Brahmans, if an unmarried but initiated boy dies, his father may perform his funeral and anniversary rites. For the souls of father and son are dependent upon one another for salvation. But among Nāyars, a man may not take part in funeral rites for one junior to him in the *taravād*, for respect toward juniors is inappropriate. A Nāyar who dies leaving no junior old enough to act as chief mourner is therefore buried without ceremony and no rites are performed for his ghost.

Nāyars have adopted the Brahmanical belief that funeral and anniversary rites assist the spirit in its passage to another world, and that immersion of the ashes in sacred water affords it peace. Like the Brahmans, they acknowledge the theory of rebirth, and hold that a spirit which is correctly propitiated after death is likely to be eventually reborn in a high estate. As in the case of the Brahmans, the theory of *karma* provides the Nāyars with a moral rationale for their high position in the caste system, and it is chiefly in this connection that I have heard it quoted. It is difficult to discover how old are Sanskritic beliefs concerning the soul among Nāyars, and they are not uniform at the present day. Most Nāyars use the word *pretam* to refer to the ghost or the soul in all contexts. This is a Sanskrit word (*preta*) for a malevolent ghost, but it is used by Nambūdiri Brahmans only for alien malevolent ghosts. A few Nāyars stated that that aspect of the soul which is reborn is the *ātmā*. This Sanskrit word is used by Brahmans for the soul in connection with rebirth and with union with the universal soul, called *paramātmā*. The *ātmā*, these Nāyar informants say, is neither malevolent nor beneficent. It cannot be understood by ordinary people and is a subject for philosophers. The *pretam*, by contrast, is the punitive ghost of an ancestor or of one who died violently. It can be only too easily understood even by the ignorant and does not require deep study. This belief in two souls, or in a soul and a ghost, may be modern, for it was given by only a few younger informants.

At all events, the Sanskritic rites of death are customarily adapted by Nāyars to belief in a malevolent *pretam*, for at every step fear of the *pretam* is referred to. Whereas Brahmans perform the rites ostensibly in order that the soul may be at peace, Nāyars have traditionally performed them in active fear of the ghost's retaliation should its comfort not be ensured. During the days of pollution, Nāyars offer rice balls before a palmyra stem set up in the yard before the ancestral house. The *pretam* of the deceased is believed to enter this stem, and it is believed that it will attack the *taravād* with further death or with sickness if the offerings are not satisfactorily performed. During the offerings each Nāyar propitiant in turn wears round his waist a piece of cloth torn from the wrapper of the corpse in order to associate himself with the spirit. But inside this cloth Nāyars also tuck a knife, blade uppermost, to ward off the spirit's attack. After the offerings are made, both Brahmans and Nāyars clap their wet hands to summon crows to eat the rice balls. If the crows do not come, it is believed that the spirit has not received the offering. This may then be repeated on the advice of the astrologer. In Tanjore, Brahmans seemed to regret the miscarriage of the offering only for the sake of the spirit. But Nāyars regard it as an extremely evil omen, and fear the ghost's retaliation in the form of a second death within the *taravād*. The Brahmanical ceremonies themselves contain rites of segregation from the deceased which are susceptible to the interpretation that those who perform them wish to be rid of him. Such, for example, is the rite of dashing a pot of water at the head end of

the pyre toward the close of the cremation, and the disposal of the bones and ashes in a river far from the ancestral house. But among my Brahman informants in Tanjore these rites were carried out without explanation, and hostility to the dead seemed to find no conscious expression. Nāyars performed the same rites in full consciousness of fear and hostility to the ghost. Even at the end of the *dīkṣā* period when the chief mourner has deposited the ashes in a river, Nāyars believe that Bhairava and Kāla, messengers of the god of death, dog the mourner's footsteps back to his ancestral house. He is out of danger from them only after performing final offerings in the house which gather the ghost to its forebears and thus appease its wrath. Nāyars, like Brahmans, express grief at a death and engage in ceremonial weeping, although neither caste weeps with the loud vehemence characteristic of the lower polluting castes. But whereas Brahmans give full expression to grief and guilt, suppressing the hostile aspect of their ambivalence, Nāyars perform the same rites in consciousness both of grief and of hostile fear of the dead.

The traditional Nāyar rites and beliefs illustrate the common phenomenon of elements of symbolic culture being diffused from one group to another and endowed with a new emotional content and meaning in accordance with the needs of the receiving group. The Nāyars presumably adopted Brahmanical death rites centuries ago because of the prestige associated with certain distinctive customs of the highest group in the caste society. The extensive contact with Brahmans afforded to them by hypergamous marital unions gave them an unusual exposure to Sanskrit culture. But through centuries of exposure to Brahmanical custom the Nāyars retained such characteristically "low caste" features as animal sacrifice to punitive deities, religious possession, and propitiation of punitive lineage ghosts. I would argue that the Nāyars and lower castes retained these customs because the emotional dispositions engendered by their occupations and social relations—in particular, their ways of handling aggression and relationships to authorities—are different from those of Brahmans. Presumably also the Nāyars adapted the Sanskritic death rites to their own role structure and belief system, because these grew out of and served to uphold norms of relationships within the *taravād*.

The Cults of Alien Ghosts

In addition to lineage ghosts, Nāyars believe that the spirits of persons of any caste who died prematurely from epidemic, accident, murder, or suicide can bring misfortune to the living. Such ghosts, which I call alien ghosts, haunt the neighborhood where they died and are particularly malevolent. The misfortunes they inflict include many kinds of sickness; madness, female barrenness, cattle deaths, house fires, or poltergeist activities. Like lineage ghosts, most alien ghosts are called *pretams*. In Cochin, the Sanskrit word *piśāca* is sometimes used to distinguish them from lineage ghosts. In Kottayam, there is an elaborate cult of certain particularly important ghosts, which are called *teyyams* (a corruption of the Sanskrit word *deva* 'god').

In Cochin, one or more alien ghosts is sometimes attached to a Nāyar *taravād*, whose members are obliged to arrange for its regular propitiation. The ghost may be that of a person who is known to have died violently, within living memory, on the *taravād's* land. Alternatively, when a misfortune occurs in a household, the astrologer may newly discover that the ghost of some such person, long dead, is haunting the *aravād's* land. He may order a shrine to be built and propitiations to be made. Shrines

Funeral and *śrāddham* rites persist in a fuller form, but these, too, are often curtailed. This is especially the case in *taravāds* which have lost their ancestral wealth. Rice balls are sometimes offered only on the two last days of the pollution period. Only close kin, and not the whole Nāyar community, are invited to the sixteenth day feast. Often no *dīkṣā* is observed at all. Alternatively, twelve sets of *dīkṣā* rites, for the twelve months of the year of mourning, may be performed in succession on the sixteenth day. Often the bones are not taken to a sacred river. If they are taken, it may be believed that the ghost is thenceforth appeased and that no further *śrāddham* or ancestral rites are required.

The role-structure of death rites has also changed. In most households only immediate younger brothers and maternal nephews, or the own children of a deceased woman, take part in the offerings, instead of the whole *taravād* as heretofore. On the other hand, women, as well as men, now offer rice balls to the ghosts of their parents or matrilineal elders. This reflects a change in the legal status of women, and the fact that women are now the legal heads of many recently partitioned households. In elementary family households, spouses now frequently observe death pollution for one another. At the same time, each may now even refuse to attend the funerals of matrilineal kin. Both in Cochin and Kottayam, the son of a man now often replaces the matrilineal heir as chief mourner, especially if he has inherited his father's property. Nāyars indeed say that "the rites go with the property." If there are disputes over the property, sons and nephews may dispute the right to perform the ceremonies, feeling that their performance gives the chief mourner the right of inheritance. Some men perform rites for both father and mother's brother; others, for neither, if neither bequeathed wealth. The beliefs which accompany funeral and *śrāddham* rites have also suffered attrition. In general, the belief that death rites are performed solely to give rest to the spirit is triumphing over the belief in the necessity to propitiate punitive ghosts. On the other hand, the Nāyars do not dwell on the traditional Brahmanical belief in the tortures of hell which await unpropitiated souls. Many state that they now disbelieve in any form of afterlife. These perform rites only as a mark of respect for and commemoration of the dead. A very few refuse to observe death pollution or to perform funeral rites at all. One educated Nāyar, for example—a medical doctor—stated that on the deaths of his parents he would merely cremate their bodies and invite a few like-minded friends to a meal to commemorate them.

Analysis. Behind these changes lie several separable though related kinds of change in Nāyar social structure and culture. With regard to changes in the cults of dead kinsfolk, the collapse of the *taravād* as a legal and economic corporation is of major importance. With the loss of collective legal responsibility which this entails goes a loss of the sense of collective moral responsibility. Nāyars who are no longer legally responsible for one another, who no longer share land, a common house, and a common destiny, no longer think it probable that their misdemeanors can bring misfortune to each other.

The collapse of the *taravād* is also, of course, accompanied by a total change in the relationships between matrilineal kin. Mother's brothers whose property is divided from that of their nephews no longer have authority over them. Indeed, the mother's brother is now often absent in his wife's house when a child is growing up and exerts no discipline over him. In any case the change which takes place in matrilineal relationships after a modern division of property is very marked. One man whose *taravād*